



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# **Assembly Members Pension Scheme (NI) 2016**

## **A guide to the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure**

The Trustees, and administrators acting on their behalf, make decisions under the scheme rules that affect scheme members (including dependents). You may not agree with a decision which has been made in your case and may want a decision explained or reviewed.

While we hope that most problems can be dealt with informally, we recognise that sometimes this is not possible.

This guidance describes our formal procedure for raising and settling complaints and explains why it has been set up.

## **Background**

The Pensions Act 1995 requires all occupational pension schemes to have a formal Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP). This procedure gives scheme members, and the dependents of scheme members, the opportunity to have their complaint properly investigated and disputes resolved correctly, fairly and speedily.

## **Who can use the Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure?**

- Current MLAs who are contributing to the pension scheme;
- Former MLAs who have deferred benefits in the scheme;
- Members receiving a pension from the scheme;
- Widows, widowers, surviving civil partners, unmarried partners, or dependents of deceased members.

You may wish to ask someone else to make and manage your complaint on your behalf. In this case, you must ensure that the person acting on your behalf has a written and signed agreement from you, as we will need to see this before we can pass on any information we hold about you to them.

## **First steps**

The vast majority of pension problems can be resolved or explained quickly and informally. If you require an explanation of a decision, or feel that facts were overlooked in making the decision, please contact the Pensions Manager in the first instance:

The Pensions Manager  
Northern Ireland Assembly  
Human Resources Office  
Room 402, Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast  
BT4 3XX

☎ 028 9052 1685

e-mail: [pensions@niassembly.gov.uk](mailto:pensions@niassembly.gov.uk)

If your issue cannot be resolved informally, you can move to the formal process.

## **The Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure**

You have the right to raise your complaint with the Trustees of the Assembly Members Pension Scheme. Your application must be in writing and clearly state the details of your complaint along with any evidence you wish to present in support of your complaint.

You should normally raise your complaint within 6 months of being informed of the decision which you wish to complain about.

Please provide your full name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number and details of the decision you disagree with and why.

If you are acting on behalf of someone else, you will need to provide this information, and additional relevant information about yourself, for example your name and address for correspondence. We will also require written confirmation from the person entitled to make a complaint under this procedure that you are acting on their behalf, and that we can discuss details of their case with you.

You will receive a written response within 4 months of submitting your complaint. If it is not possible to provide a final response in this time we will send you an interim response, explaining the reason for the delay and giving an expected date for a full reply.

A final response will be issued within 15 days of the date of the Trustees making a decision in your case. The response will explain the Trustees decision to uphold or decline your complaint. It will also include the relevant scheme regulations and any additional legislation which was considered in reaching a decision.

You should submit details of your complaint in writing to:

The Chairperson of the Assembly Members Pension Trustees  
Northern Ireland Assembly  
C/o Human Resources Office  
Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast, BT4 3XX.

If you require advice about managing your complaint, or require general guidance on pensions, you can contact one of the organisations listed below:

### **The Pensions Ombudsman**

The Pension Ombudsman deals with complaints about how pension schemes are run. The service is free and open to people who are not satisfied with the way their pension scheme has dealt with a situation. The Ombudsman is completely independent and impartial. You can contact the Pensions Ombudsman for assistance at any stage of your complaint.

The Ombudsman can be contacted at:

The Pensions Ombudsman  
10 South Colonnade  
Canary Wharf  
E14 4PU

☎ 0800 917 4487

💻 [www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.pensions-ombudsman.org.uk)

### **The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS)**

The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS) provides free independent and impartial information and guidance on pensions.

TPAS can be contacted at:

The Pensions Advisory Service  
11 Belgrave Road  
London  
SW1V 1RB

☎ 0800 011 3797

💻 [www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk](http://www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk)

*We will hold the information you provide for the purpose of administering the scheme and managing your complaint under this procedure. You can view the Scheme Privacy notice [here](#).*